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FROM

Stedman W. Dear

ADDRESS
OF THE
WHIGS OF THE LEGISLATURE
OF
MASSACHUSETTS
TO THE
WHIGS OF THE UNION.

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Stedman B. Hoar

**THE WHIGS OF MASSACHUSETTS TO THE WHIGS
OF THE UNION.**

At a meeting of the Whig Members of the Legislature of Massachusetts, holden on Friday Evening, 28th April, 1848, in the Tremont Temple in Boston, according to previous notice; the Hon. ZENO SCUDDER of Barnstable, President of the Senate, being called to the Chair, and FREDERIC W. LINCOLN, Esq., of Boston, and ASA SEVERANCE, Esq., of Shelburne, being Secretaries; the following ADDRESS was unanimously adopted.

ADDRESS.

ANOTHER Presidential election is at hand. The Whigs throughout the country are preparing to do their duty in the contest as patriotic men.

They are animated by a desire to place in the chief Executive office some one whose election shall establish the ascendancy of those Whig principles, on the maintenance of which they believe the safety and honor of the Union depend.

They desire to have presented as their candidate a man, the probability of whose success may be reasonable, and the result of that success fruitful.

Such are the sentiments which inspire us, and the people of Massachusetts, and such doubtless are the feelings of the great Whig party of the country.

In such views, all of us can unite, and in that Union is our hope, and our only hope.

"In the dark and troubled night that is upon us, I see no star above the horizon, promising light to guide us, but the intelligent, patriotic, united Whig party of the United States."

These words were uttered some time since, in Faneuil Hall. What they declared was received as practical truth. It is as much truth now as it was then, and equally worthy to be regarded as a rule of action.

Whig principles constitute a system of policy not local or partial, but favorable to the interests of

every part of the country, conformable to the true and well-established doctrines of the Constitution, and essential to the general prosperity. Those principles are well known as Whig principles, not only in Massachusetts, but in every other State, north, south, and west. They are the principles which carried General Harrison to the head of the Government, in 1840 ; and we believe them to be at this moment as fully entertained and adopted by a majority of the people of the United States, as they were then.

We know the causes which led to the defeat of the candidate who stood upon these principles in 1844. We will not recapitulate them. A person opposed to all Whig principles, Whig measures and Whig politics was elected President at that time. The result is before us. We were at once plunged into a war, not yet finished, in which thousands of gallant men have perished, the cost of which, up to the close of the present year, is not less than one hundred millions of dollars, and the conclusion of which, whenever that may come, is likely to bring fresh dangers and embarrassments on the country and on its institutions of government. But it is of no avail to dwell upon the past. We are now enduring some of the evil consequences of domestic mal-administration, and others probably greater are yet to be met.

The dangers and difficulties which encompass us are vastly augmented by the political occurrences in Europe, which, however much we may approve their objects and general tendency, are likely, without the greatest prudence on our part, to involve us in hurtful entanglements and jeopardize our best interests.

At home and abroad, great questions are springing up, touching not merely administrations and

party measures, but the fate of governments and people; the peace of the world, and above all, the continuance of our own institutions, and our existence as a Union.

In view of all these things, fully impressed with a solemn sense of the perils of the times, and the gravity and momentous importance of the events that have already transpired, and of others that are likely soon to occur, we, the Whigs of the Legislature of Massachusetts, about to separate and return to our respective homes in the Commonwealth, cannot part with a sense of duty discharged, without calling upon our brethren, throughout the Union, and upon all other good citizens, to unite with us in endeavors so to guide the counsels of the nation, and to put them under such a lead, as shall seem most probable, by the blessing of divine Providence, to conduct us in safety through the serious troubles now upon us, and the doubtful hazards of the future.

The result of the next Presidential election, as it appears to us, may very possibly be the turning point of our fortunes. Upon the administration then to be put in power will depend, in a great degree certainly, and perhaps entirely, the future destiny of our country.

It is, then, particularly with relation to this event, that we address you.

We shall do so with perfect respect and kindness, with an entire regard to the feelings of others, with moderation, and we hope with distinctness.

There are several distinguished and excellent Whigs among us, in various parts of the country, and in different walks of life, who have been named as worthy candidates for the first office in the Government of the United States.

We cheerfully subscribe to whatever may be justly or generously said in their commendation. We admit readily that either of them, in times of ordinary trial, might successfully administer the affairs of the government. We question neither their ability, their patriotism, nor their devotion to Whig principles. We are happy in our convictions of their worth, for certainly the country needs whatever of profound wisdom, of experience, sagacity, firmness, foresight and patriotism is to be found in it, and we trust it may all be combined in support of its true interest and glory.

But it seems to us that circumstances at this time indicate one man, as pre-eminently fitted for the great task of safe and honorable administration of national affairs. A man from among the longest versed in the public councils, whose talent no one questions, whose devotion to Whig principles will never be doubted, since many of these principles are doctrines derived from his own teachings, and from his unequalled expositions, particularly, of the Constitution under which we live, whose power in the direction of grave affairs is unsurpassed, whose integrity is undoubted, and whose patriotism is proof: A man whose life has been spent in the public service, whose labors have been for the public good, who has all that experience, and that foresight, that firmness, and that moderation, that strength, and that judgment, that acquaintance with public concerns, that reputation abroad and that confidence at home, which, and all of which, are necessary to the successful administration of affairs, under their present portentous aspect: A man who, respecting all the "arrangements and compromises of the Constitution," and the rights of all under them, will yet never suf-

fer them to be extended and increased, to the destruction of our political equality ;—prompt to admit the just rights of one portion of the Union, but able and ready to vindicate and maintain those of the other, and to make the whole respected and honored abroad,—that man, we say, is DANIEL WEBSTER: and him we commend to the Whig Party of the Country, if they desire a success that shall prove a success worthy of an effort.

We propose to go into no statement of Mr. Webster's qualifications, no account of his life. Where the history of the public affairs of the country has not reached, no address of ours can penetrate. To those who know nothing of the great questions of Constitutional Law, of Nullification, of Currency and Finance, of Internal Improvements, of Protection to American Industry, of Annexation of Slave Territory, of International Controversies between this and Foreign Nations, and of Mr. Webster's part in the discussion and decision of them all, an appeal from us would certainly be quite useless. To intelligent Whigs throughout the land, the recital of the subjects is sufficient.

Still less do we intend to argue any questions that have been raised elsewhere, as to Mr. Webster's "availability," as it is called.

Experience teaches us that such a quality cannot be known until it is tested ; and is not always found where it has been said to be most strong.

If such a candidate as Mr. Webster, representing Whig principles, cannot be chosen by the Whigs of the Union, we see not how any success can attend the party, except by *a sacrifice of those principles themselves, or some of them* ; and this the Whigs of Massachusetts do not propose.

At the present time, were there a more distinguished person in some other portion of the Union, in whom the people might be thought to have greater confidence—whose name had not been before presented to them as a candidate for the presidency—who was identified with the Whigs as a champion of their principles—and whose abilities and experience in civil and political life, were superior, or considered superior, to his, such is our sense of the difficulties of the times, and the dangers which we have to encounter, that we should refrain from urging as an argument for the selection of a northern man, the fact that so great a portion of the Executive administration of the government has been committed to the hands of southern statesmen. In our ruling desire to place power in the hands most capable of using it for the benefit of the whole, we should forget or disregard this circumstance.

Neither would we, under such a condition of things, take occasion to remember, that in the many compromises that have been made for the sake of union and harmony, it has fallen to us always to make them, and that they have been effected by our giving up or postponing our reasonable expectations and desires.

But now, when, as in our opinion, the condition of the country requires the most wise and statesman-like management, and a statesman pre-eminently qualified to guide difficult affairs is found here, these suggestions, in addition to those of the character and reputation of the man, may be urged with perfect propriety, and with great if not irresistible force.

We will not allow ourselves to doubt, that the Whigs of other parts of the Union admit their full weight.

We doubt not the eminent success which will attend such a man, at such a time as this, when presented by the Whigs of the Union, as a candidate for the Chief Executive office.

Our brethren at the South and the West are well aware of his respect for their just rights, and his regard for their best interests. They know that by no one will these rights and interests be more surely protected and more fully sustained. We know the source, whence the ablest defence and maintenance of ours has proceeded, and the whole Country knows, who has most powerfully advocated her International Rights, and advanced her honors, and who has known how with even hand to maintain against the strongest, and enforce from the most haughty, her just claims, and at the same time to preserve peace and bring about cordial good understanding.

This man, we, the Whigs of the Legislature of Massachusetts, present to the Whigs of the Union.

We desire it to be understood, that having been always most anxious to preserve unbroken the union of the party, of which we have given many signal proofs, by the withdrawal of our claims from the consideration of Conventions heretofore held for the purpose of selecting a Whig candidate for the Presidency; having exerted always our whole strength, without any withholding, in the support of that candidate, whoever he might be; and the time having in our opinion now arrived, when an acknowledgement and return of such conduct is due; when the Free States, if ever, are to assert their right to an equal participation in the Government of the country; when we have among us the MAN whom the circumstances of the country, and exigencies of

the times, imperiously demand, we are not to be expected to forego or lay aside our just rights, or to be put by with arguments and assertions already sufficiently used.

Massachusetts is Whig — always Whig; New England is Whig; the Free States of the North are Whig. The Whig candidate for the Presidency is to be chosen, if chosen at all, by their votes. In them the main strength of the Whigs of the Union is found, and *no WHIG President can be elected without them.*

It is but just, therefore, that they should have an influence in the choice of a candidate, proportioned to the strength they contribute to his election.

On behalf of one of these Free States, not the youngest nor least known, we declare our determination to support a candidate who belongs not to the North only, but to the whole country; whose name and fame are guaranties of his fidelity to the great principles which we profess; under whom the interests of all will be surely and equally protected; who will maintain the *Constitution* as it is, the *Union* as it is; but who will not suffer us to be overbalanced by annexations of foreign territory; nor by the further extension of the institution of Slavery, which is equally repugnant to the feelings and incompatible with the political rights of the Free States. A man under whose guidance, we may feel ourselves safe, and the institutions of the country secure: and who shall revive our hopes of maintaining while we live, and of leaving to our descendants when we die, a permanent, *free* and equal form of Government, to be continued by a peaceful and prosperous nation.

We intend nothing unfriendly to any, we wish no disturbance of harmony, no interruption of unanim-

ity; but we are not, and shall not be unmindful of what is due to us, to the North, to the Country; and of what the safety and integrity of the whole seem to us to require.

In conclusion, we take leave to say, that, in uttering these sentiments, we do but repeat the unanimous and enthusiastic declaration of the Whig Convention of Massachusetts, of September last. And we feel it our duty to add, that we believe it to be the resolute purpose of the Whig people of Massachusetts, to support these sentiments, and carry into effect the design which they manifest.







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